



# Australian Bureau of Statistics

## 6286.0 - Australians' Employment and Unemployment Patterns, 1994 - 1997

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## Summary

### Main Features

#### MAIN FINDINGS

#### JOBSEEKERS' LABOUR MARKET EXPERIENCES

At May 1995 there were approximately 875,000 Jobseekers aged 15-59 years in Australia. Between May 1995 and September 1997, 25% of these found 'sustained work' (that is, they worked for at least 12 months in total, and in jobs with an average length of 12 months or more).

A further 21% of Jobseekers worked for at least six months in jobs between 6 and 12 months duration on average ('moderate' work experiences), and 16% had 'shorter' work experiences (that is, they worked for six months or more in at least two jobs with an average length of less than six months).

Some 16% of Jobseekers found 'minimal work' - less than six months in total - while 23% did not find any work at all.

#### Age

People aged 15-24 made up 35% of all Jobseekers, but represented 49% of those who had 'shorter' work experiences and 24% of those who had not worked at all.

#### Annual income

Jobseekers with sustained work experiences between May 1995 and September 1997 received more income than others - for example, these Jobseekers received \$21,500 on average in the financial year 1996-97, compared with \$13,700 for those with shorter work experiences and \$8,600 for those who had not worked.

#### Job characteristics

Of wage and salary jobs found by Jobseekers with shorter work experiences, 25% were permanent compared with 55% of those found by Jobseekers with sustained work experiences.

More than one in four jobs found by Jobseekers with sustained work required a post-school qualification, compared with one in seven jobs found by those with minimal work.

## **Job search episodes**

On average, Jobseekers with sustained work experiences spent 18 days longer looking for work than Jobseekers with shorter work experiences. This may be partly because Jobseekers with sustained work were looking for full-time work only in 47% of their job search episodes. In comparison, Jobseekers with shorter work experiences were looking for full-time work only in 41% of their job search episodes.

## **JOBSEEKERS' LABOURMARKET OUTCOMES**

The proportion of Jobseekers at May 1995 who were working in subsequent months increased steadily to 45% after 12 months (to May 1996), but then rose only gradually to 52% in September 1997.

At September 1997, 32% of Jobseekers were in 'stable' work (either full-time or part-time), that is, they were in a job which had lasted for six months or more and were not concurrently looking for work.

Another 20% were in 'unstable' work, that is, they were in a job that had lasted for less than six months or the Jobseeker was concurrently looking for work.

A further 26% of Jobseekers had worked at some time between May 1995 and September 1997, but were no longer working at September 1997. The remaining 23% had not worked at all between May 1995 and September 1997.

## **Personal characteristics**

Just over 30% of both males and females were in stable work at September 1997. For males, this work was predominantly full-time, but half of the females in stable work were in part-time jobs.

Of Jobseekers aged 15-19, 87% had worked between May 1995 and September 1997, a greater proportion than Jobseekers in other age groups. However, 25% of young Jobseekers were in unstable work at September 1997.

Over a third of Jobseekers who had a post-school qualification, or who attended the highest level of secondary school available, were in stable work at September 1997, compared with just over a quarter of those who did not attend the highest level of secondary school available.

Jobseekers' labour market outcomes were clearly related to English proficiency. Of Jobseekers who reported that they did not speak English well or at all, 61% had not worked at all between May 1995 and September 1997.

## **Relative socio-economic disadvantage**

The proportion of Jobseekers in stable work increased as the degree of socio-economic disadvantage of their area of residence decreased. Conversely, the proportion of Jobseekers who had not worked increased with increasing socio-economic disadvantage.

## **Time spent looking for work**

There was a clear relationship between the time Jobseekers had spent looking for work before May 1995 and their labour market outcome at September 1997. Almost 40% of Jobseekers who had been looking for work for 12 months or more (and were not

concurrently working) did not find any work between May 1995 and September 1997, more than double the proportion of those had been looking for work for less than 12 months. Of Jobseekers who had been looking for work for less than 12 months, 34% were in stable work, compared with 20% of those who had been looking for work for 12 months or more.

### **Job offers**

The vast majority of Jobseekers who had not worked between May 1995 and September 1997 reported that they had not had any job offers (91%).

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF JOBS**

An issue of interest associated with Jobseekers' transition to work is whether the jobs they obtain are predominantly permanent or long-term or whether they are more likely to be short-term or casual, and how the characteristics of these jobs compare with those of jobs held by the general population.

### **Jobseekers and the general population**

In making comparisons between Jobseekers and the general population, it should be noted that some differences between the job characteristics or the work experiences of the two groups may be due to the different composition of these two groups. For example, Jobseekers at May 1995 tended to be younger than the general population - 35% were aged 15-24, compared with 24% of the general population.

At September 1997, of Jobseekers who were working, 61% were in stable jobs compared with 83% of the general population. Of those Jobseekers who were working, 62% were in full-time jobs compared with 72% of the general population.

Of Jobseekers who were wage and salary earners, 56% were in permanent jobs, compared with 76% of those in the general population.

Jobseekers who were employees at September 1997 tended to earn less than those in the general population - 63% earned less than \$480 per week, compared with 37% of those in the general population.

A larger proportion of Jobseekers' stable jobs were in less skilled occupations, compared with the general population. Smaller proportions of Jobseekers who were in stable jobs were working as Managers and administrators or Professionals, while larger proportions were working as Intermediate clerical, sales and service workers or Labourers and related workers.

### **Jobseekers' work**

A larger proportion of Jobseekers in stable work were in their preferred occupation than those in unstable work (68% and 53% respectively).

Of Jobseekers who were working full-time at September 1996, 73% were working full-time a year later, and 57% were in the same job.

Some 60% of Jobseekers who were in a permanent job at September 1996 were still permanent in the same job a year later. Of those in casual work at September 1996, 9% had moved to permanent work in the same job a year later.

# About this Release

## ABOUT THIS RELEASE

Presents data from the longitudinal Survey of Employment and Unemployment Patterns. The publication focuses on the Australian labour market experiences of jobseekers and the general population, and on changes in people's characteristics over time.

Note: A Unit Record File is available on CD-ROM (6286.0.30.001).

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